United Nations S/PV.7387

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7387th meeting

Wednesday, 18 February 2015, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
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	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
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	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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15-04441 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Mohamed El Hadi Dayri, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Egypt, Italy and Tunisia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and His Excellency Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs of Algeria.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Bernardino León, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting. On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. León, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Tunis.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. León.

Mr. León: I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Council today on the situation in Libya at this critical juncture. Let me begin by expressing my condolences and sympathy to all the families of the victims of terrorism and extremism in Libya. I condemn in the strongest possible terms the horrific and brutal acts we have witnessed in Libya in recent days and weeks. No words can express my outrage and revulsion at the beheading of 21 men, including 20 Egyptian nationals who were targeted for no other reason than their religious belief and nationality.

The scale of this atrocity should not eclipse the barbarity of other acts committed by extremist groups, including the Islamic State and Ansar al-Sharia. In November, three young activists were beheaded in Derna. Towards the end of December, a young Egyptian doctor and his wife, also Copts, were brutally murdered at their home in Sirte; their daughter, who was abducted, was found dead on the city's outskirts the next day. These are but a few of the countless incidents that every day affect thousands of civilians, who bear the brunt of war and displacement and are victims of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, especially in areas like Benghazi. The savage terrorist acts highlight once again the imminent danger confronting Libya, its people and the wider region unless there is a swift agreement among the main parties in the country on resolving the political crisis and bringing an end to the military and political conflict.

Since my last briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7264), we have witnessed blatant disregard by Islamic State elements for Libya's sovereignty and state institutions. The capture of public installations in Sirte and the attack last month on the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli reflect a growing ability and determination on the part of the Islamic State to exploit the political crisis and consequent security vacuum to consolidate its presence and influence across Libya.

Recent incidents, including the attacks on the oilfields in Mabruk and south of Sidra clearly demonstrate the increasing ability of the Islamic State and other terrorist groups to operate in different parts of the country, whether in Derna, Benghazi, Sirte or Sabratha. Extremist groups with radical ideologies associated with Al-Qaida have been on the rise since the end of the armed conflict in 2011, with Ansar al-Sharia's strongholds in Benghazi and Derna already constituting a serious terrorist challenge in the context of the Libyan crisis. These have served as platforms for mobilizing support for the Islamic State.

The Islamic State has already shown its potential for destruction in Iraq and Syria. Operating across borders, it has mobilized recruits and significant financial resources, including through the use of social media. In Libya, the Islamic State has found fertile ground in the growing post-revolution political instability, capitalizing also on the weakness of State institutions and the State security sector. The steady influx of foreign nationals has bolstered its ranks and now threatens to introduce yet another dimension to the conflict in Libya. We should be gravely concerned by

this turn of events and firmly oppose the ideology and terrorist practices of the Islamic State. These radical forces must be confronted at every turn. No strategy will be successful without strong regional cooperation and an empowered Libyan State and authorities.

We must not lose sight of the complexities of Libya's crisis, its weak and fragmented State institutions, their current political polarization, the predominance of armed groups seemingly oblivious to the national interest, media incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, and corruption. These are all factors that have contributed to the current breakdown of basic State functions and the disruption of the country's economy and of its social fabric.

Since my last briefing to the Council, we have made considerable headway in bringing the main parties to the negotiating table. We have progressively structured a political dialogue along five mutually reinforcing tracks, bringing together representatives from a broad spectrum of the Libyan political, military and social landscape. The objective of the dialogue is to bring Libya out of the chaos that is providing terrorism with fertile ground to breed further violence and destruction. In January, the United Nations hosted two rounds of political talks in Geneva in which discussions were focused on reaching agreement on a national unity Government and security arrangements, to include a comprehensive ceasefire.

Within Libya, reactions to the talks have been overwhelmingly positive and appear to have injected a new ray of hope regarding the possibility of a peaceful resolution of the political crisis and military conflict. Notwithstanding the hard-line positions initially adopted by some of the parties, the fact that all the major stakeholders now recognize the gravity of the situation and the need for a political resolution is and must be seen as a positive sign.

On this note, I am pleased to report that a week ago I was in Ghadames where, for the first time, all the parties joined the United Nations-facilitated political dialogue. No doubt, this marks an important breakthrough towards an inclusive political agreement, which remains the only avenue for a sustainable way out of the crisis. I am hopeful that a political agreement can be reached soon. The differences among the parties are not insurmountable, and I am confident that their sense of responsibility for the fate of the Libyan people and the national unity, democracy and territorial integrity of the Libyan State will prevail over their differences. Yesterday marked the anniversary of a revolution intended to realize these values, which look so far away today.

We are also making progress, slow but steady, in trying to de-escalate the situation on the military front. These efforts have intensified following a string of attacks in the oil crescent region towards the end of December, and except for the attack by Islamic State elements in the Mabruk oilfield on 3 February, there has been a relative truce in hostilities Nonetheless, the overall situation remains fragile and there is much work to be done. The overall situation in Benghazi remains dire, and only yesterday we received reports of aerial attacks on Zintan in the west.

The images of the brutal acts of terror that we have witnessed in Libya in recent months have shaken our collective conscience. We must capitalize on this sense of urgency and, today more than ever, we must stand firmly behind the political process. Given the sense of urgency, I have called for the next meeting of the political dialogue in order to finalize discussions initiated in Geneva on the formation of a Government of national unity and security arrangements to pave the way for a formal and comprehensive cessation of hostilities.

Defeating terrorism in Libya can be achieved only through the political and institutional determination of a united Libyan Government, which will need the strong and unequivocal support of the international community in confronting the myriad challenges facing Libya. First and foremost, this will require the development of a coherent and comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism, as well as the identification of the needs and support required from the international community.

It is our shared responsibility to build consensus among the Libyan counterparts. It is crucial for the international community as a whole to maintain a unity of purpose through coherent messaging and actions. Our efforts to counter terrorism in a sustainable manner cannot be a series of isolated acts and we should not allow terrorism to disrupt the political dialogue. Allow me to take this opportunity to remind all parties that nothing in their actions or decisions at this critical time should be allowed to provide space or the opportunity for terrorist groups to further consolidate their presence or influence. I urge them to intensify their engagement

towards a political resolution of the crisis. The window of opportunity is rapidly closing, and no effort must be spared.

It is only through a strong Government of national unity based on a solid consensus that Libyans, with the support of the international community, can aspire to put in place an effective strategy to combat the growing threat posed by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State. I would like to thank all the Governments of the region and international actors for their support to United Nations efforts. I would also like to call on all Member States to spare no effort in support of a political resolution of the Libyan crisis.

Finally, I take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to Libya's democratic transition, and to say that our engagement in Libya will continue to be guided by our utmost respect for Libya's sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. León for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya.

Mr. Dayri (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on China's accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We have every confidence in your ability to lead the Council and to achieve fruitful results.

The people and Government of Libya once again reiterate their deep condolences to our brothers in the Arab Republic of Egypt; to the President, the Government and the people of Egypt; and to the families and victims of the heinous crime perpetrated by the terrorist group the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) against 21 Egyptian citizens in Libya. Such a heinous act runs counter to all principles and values of humanity and monotheistic religions.

My country reiterates its condemnation and absolute rejection of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of the source, motive or justification, wherever and by whomever it is perpetrated. My country reaffirms that terrorism is a serious phenomenon that threatens the stability and security of States. We are seeing this phenomenon turn into a front line that stretches from the Middle East through North Africa and covers the Mediteranean as well as the Sahel, demonstrating that no one in those regions is immune to the phenomenon.

I was eager to personally attend this meeting, following the 19 December 2014 Security Council debate on counter-terrorism (see S/PV.7351), in order to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Libya to combating contemporary terrorism as one of our top priorities. The terrorist group ISIS and its allies have been working tirelessly to kill and assassinate innocent people, destroy the infrastructure and economies of countries, and to offer a safe haven for terrorists of various nationalities. This is a threat to Libya and other States, particularly our neighbouring States.

Nevertheless, among the positive indicators that have arisen, we look forward to a national dialogue in Libya. The three rounds of discussion will take place thanks to the remarkable and laudable efforts of Mr. Bernardino León, Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and his good offices aimed at ensuring unity and successful dialogue.

As we await further success, the complex situation prevailing in my country is deteriotating, in particular since ISIS appeared on the blood-soaked landscape, as I said earlier. While we await further success, the needs of the Libyan army have become more urgent than ever before, with a view to strengthening the national dialogue based, inter alia, on the need to combat terrorism. It has become increasingly apparent of late that the army must be supported in its mission through strengthened efforts, which must include, first, dealing with all Libyan terrorist groups and organizations, such as Ansar al-Sharia and ISIS. That will require the international community — which helped Libya rid itself of the former dictatorial regime before leaving it prey to the security vacuum — to shoulder its legal and moral responsibilities in providing urgent support, first and foremost, by rebuilding and rearming our armed forces so that they can take action.

Before both the General Assembly and the Security Council, the legitimate Libyan authorities have repeatedly alerted the international community to the dangers of terrorism and its spread to Libya. Today, I am here to reiterate in this Chamber that Libya can no longer remain silent in the face of terrorism. It is clear that the challenges facing Libya's legitimate authorities are enormous now that armed terrorist groups have taken possession of entire cities in Libya and are proclaiming the Al-Qaida doctrine and announced to the entire world that they have joined with ISIS. They have attempted to take over the ports from which we export oil and have attacked several oil fields in

order to finance their terrorist activities throughout the world and to transform Libya into a hub for their terrorist activities in North Africa, the Sahel and the Mediterranean basin.

In the light of all this, we welcomed the adoption last week of resolution 2199 (2015). However, the Council's interest in the disastrous situation of terrorism prevailing in my country is nowhere near the intensity that benefited our brothers in Iraq and Syria when they faced similar problems. We therefore call upon the international community to shoulder its responsibility in maintaining peace and security in Libya, particularly since the situation in my country threatens not only the countries of Africa, but also those of Europe.

Libya requires a decisive stance on the part of the international community to help it to build the capacity of its national army by lifting the arms embargo so that our army can receive military materiel and weapons to counter the rampant terrorism in my country. Libya also requires assistance to strengthen its legal institutions to ensure their capacities to address extremism and terrorism. A failure to provide weapons and training to the Libyan army to assist it in confronting terrorism will only play into the extremists' hands, ensure instability in Libya and have negative repercussions on the security sector throughout the region, and thus on international peace and security.

The most recent success of the Libyan army in its tireless struggle against terrorism gave vivid proof of the need for professional training for its military and security institutions. While I do not call for international intervention to deal with ISIS and Ansar al-Sharia, in view of the lack of international support the Libyan Government has called on brotherly Egypt to support the Libyan army in confronting terrorism, although that call was not included in the declaration issued yesterday, 17 February.

There is a close link between terrorism and transnational crime in all its forms, including trafficking in weapons, drugs and petroleum products, money-laundering and human trafficking, among others. Cooperation must be strengthened at the international, regional and subregional levels and among the States of the region to control their borders. Appropriate coordination and information-sharing mechanisms must be established to enable the arrest and prosecution of those accused of crimes. We need effective cooperation to deal with foreign terrorist fighters, in the framework of resolution 2178 (2014), and action to halt that phenomenon. Furthermore, we must address the issue of abduction and hostage-taking, which are used by terrorist groups inside and outside of Libya as a source of financing and to exert political pressure.

In conclusion, the House of Representatives and the Government, in their capacity as the legitimate representatives of the country, extend their full support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bernardino León, in achieving a political solution to the Libyan crisis, through dialogue. The grave challenges facing Libya represent a threat to the entire region. Given the lack of effective international support, we run the risk of proving incapable of eradicating that cancer, whose spread could infest the entire region. We therefore call on the Security Council to take all these aspects fully into account. We desire backing for the legitimate Libyan authorities in their efforts to duly control the entire Libyan territory and its borders. We reaffirm our support for the Council in that process.

With respect to the resolutions on monitoring and controlling the trafficking of weapons and their transfer to armed groups in Libya, as well as the financing of those groups, we appreciate in particular the effort of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in presenting a draft resolution to the Council, and we cherish the hope that it will enjoy the Council's full support.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt.

Mr. Selim (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am fully confident that you will guide the deliberations of the Council with the utmost efficiency.

A few days ago, we were horrified to witness the slaughter of 21 Egyptian citizens on a beach in the Libyan city of Sirte. I should like to express our appreciation to all those who have condemned that barbaric act and expressed their condolences and their solidarity with the Egyptian people at this pivotal moment. Expressions of condolences and solidarity, while important, are not sufficient to confront the dangers and existential threats that civilized human beings face today. I have come to the Council to affirm that what is in fact required is to adopt strong and genuine positions and concrete measures to face the dangers posed by Daesh and its ilk, who are familiar only with the language of criminal

violence and killings. I have come here to say that the blood of Egyptians is precious, just like that of any other victims of heinous barbaric acts. I believe that they deserve our seriousness in fighting this scourge in every corner of the Earth.

I should like to review with the Council a little of the history in order to shed light on how and why we have reached the current situation in Libya. When the international coalition decided to support and defend the Libyan revolution in 2011, Egypt was a firm supporter of the aspirations and hopes of our brothers in Libya. However, at that time, we were concerned that the ultimate benefactors would be violent extremists, given that many of those fighting on behalf of the revolution were in fact backed quite generously by regional Powers that sought to install themselves in power in Libya after the fall of the regime. Despite our repeated warnings, through diplomatic channels, about the dangers of relying on extremist elements that did not represent the Libyan people, our fears were materialized. Extremists assumed a prominent position in the post-Al-Qadhafi regime.

The Libyan people elected a new Parliament — the General National Congress — which was dominated by liberal national views. Libya was the only Arab State where violent political Islam had failed to achieve a majority. But, owing to the limitless financial and military resources that violent political Islam possessed, it was soon able to superimpose its will on the Libyan people's true aspirations. Threats, kidnapping and assassinations of members of Parliament and attacks on Government institutions, with the aim of passing laws and setting policies, soon became the norm. That seriously undermined Government institutions and enabled extremists to place those institutions firmly under their control.

No doubt, everyone remembers the circumstances under which the political isolation law was passed, a law that effectively barred many Libyans who did not subscribe to political Islam from running for Government office. Among them was the Speaker of the General National Congress. In addition, there were other indications of the deterioration of the situation in Libya, including the kidnapping of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and attacks on Embassies. Attacks on Embassies, the assassination of the United States Ambassador in Benghazi, the kidnapping of Egyptian Embassy staff and other grave incidents are listed in the letter I addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council on 17 February.

However, the international community's actions were insufficient to preserve the security of the Libyan people and those of Libya's neighbouring States on the Mediterranean. Nor did the international community move effectively to counter the threats posed to international peace and security. When parliamentary elections were held in June 2014, in which political Islam gained only 10 per cent of seats, it confirmed once more the moderation of the Libyan people and their clear inclination to support democratic forces. At the time, Egypt warned that extremists would again impose their domination through the use of force in an attempt to accomplish what they failed to do through the ballot box. Nevertheless, the international community took little notice when extremists resorted to arms and occupied Tripoli, along with its airports and Government institutions, thereby forcing the legitimate Parliament to vacate the capital and to resort to holding its sessions elsewhere in Libya. That, in turn, prompted ludicrous objections from the extremists that the Parliament was convening its sessions outside the Libyan capital.

I have no doubt that the Council has followed those and other developments closely. Therefore, I will not delve into this any more. I do, however, wish to reiterate them today, because of the complacency of some in confronting those who seek to impose their will through the use of arms. Unfortunately, this comes at a time that is crucial in the history of the Arab people — when democracy and the free expression of their will should have enabled them to advance and modernize their societies, and not regress to the Dark Ages. Today, in the light of the enormity of the danger the recent events in Libya pose, not only to that country's people or its neighbouring States, but to humankind as a whole, we simply no longer have the luxury to repeat past mistakes. Our peoples will judge us.

As the international community, we have to assume the historic responsibility placed on our shoulders and on the shoulders of the Council in dealing with the clear threat to international peace and security posed by the current situation in Libya. If we are to rectify past complacency in dealing seriously with the Libyan crisis, we then must actively cooperate to support the Council of Deputies and the Libyan Government in order to enable them to extend their legitimate authority and sovereignty to all Libyan territory and

to combat terrorism wherever it exists in all parts of Libya — north, south, east and west. That will require the following measures.

First, legal restrictions placed on the ability of the legitimate Government and the Libyan National Army to procure their defence needs should be lifted so that they may be able to confront terrorism and achieve stability and security.

Secondly, concrete measures should be taken to prevent the acquisition of arms by all non-State militias and entities through the imposition of a naval blockade on arms being sent to areas of Libya outside the control of the legitimate authorities.

Thirdly, States wishing to assist the legitimate Libyan Government in confronting terrorism and imposing security should be allowed to do so in the light of the severe difficulties the legitimate Government faces in that regard, with the condition that such assistance be provided in coordination with the Libyan Government and with its approval.

Egypt has decided to respond to the requests and needs of the Government of Libya and has provided military assistance. We will not hesitate to confront the terrorist threat that challenges our region with its ugliest face. This despicable organization is seeking to spread terror throughout the Arab and Islamic world — from Iraq to Syria to Libya and through them to the heart of Europe, which is the closest continent to our region and the most susceptible to the threat that this and similar organizations pose.

We call for full support for Arab League resolution 7852 (2015), adopted on 15 January, which calls for extending all forms of support to the Libyan Government and asks the Security Council to lift the restrictions imposed on arming the Libyan National Army. We fervently hope that the Security Council will respond positively to those calls. I trust that the Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will circulate today a draft resolution for discussion in the coming days that will address the actions required to achieve a successful conclusion to the Libyan crisis. For this threat is a most dangerous one.

Before concluding my statement, I wish to reaffirm that Egypt will continue to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bernardino León, who is making great and appreciated efforts in Libya to achieve a political settlement to the crisis through the establishment of an inclusive Government that represents all political forces that have renounced violence and terrorism and that seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict. At the same time, I wish to reiterate that, while a political solution is an absolute necessity, it is not an alternative to militarily confronting terrorism. I have no doubt that, through the current political dialogue, the Government of national unity will continue to seek to combat terrorism as a matter of priority, just as it has been a matter of priority under the current Government, led by Prime Minister Abdallah Al-Thinni.

We call upon the States represented here to do their utmost to support the legitimate House of Representatives. Waging the international community's war against terrorism requires the active participation of a national partner. We would like to deal with the honourable partners in Libya, and not those who are acting against the interests of their country. If the objective is to promote a political solution in order to let some impose their will on the Libyan people, I would ask the international community to make every possible effort to support the legitimate House of Representatives. The war against terrorism requires a national partner. There is no better partner than the Parliament of the Libyan people, which was elected through the ballot box. The current Government or its successor will gain the confidence of the House of Representatives if Mr. León is successful in his efforts, as we hope he will be.

In conclusion, I thank Council members for their time. I again express our sincere hope that the Council will deal with the crisis in Libya as a matter of extreme urgency, the utmost priority and as an issue that requires concerted efforts to confront a common danger that seeks to reverse the forward course of humankind. I trust that we as a community with a clear vision of its goals and aspirations will succeed in our mission.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs of Algeria.

Mr. Messahel (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on the situation in Libya. My thanks also go to all the members of the Security Council for allowing us to share with them the assessment and view of Algeria on the crucial and paramount issue for the security and stability of a

brotherly and neighbourly country, but also for peace within the region and beyond.

I would also like to thank and express our full appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, Mr. Bernardino León, for his selflessness and commitment and for the briefing that he gave us at the beginning of this meeting on the situation in that country, which is our immediate neighbour. I also want to commend the presence of my brothers, the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Libya, Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim and Mr. Mohamed El Hadi Dayri.

I cannot begin my statement without recalling our horror at the cowardly assassination of 21 Egyptian citizens by a terrorist group and reiterating that my country condemned with the greatest vigour this abject criminal act. I take this opportunity to reiterate Algeria's condolences to the Egyptian authorities and once again to express our full sympathy and compassion to the families of the victims.

Algeria, which has suffered and confronted the ills of terrorism, including coming from Libyan territory, as was the case with the attack against the oil facility in Tigantourine, which the Algerian security forces were able to neutralize by freeing more than 800 hostages and preserving the facilities within the complex. We know how much international solidarity and cooperation are essential in such circumstances.

This latest development clearly illustrates how the situation has deteriorated, and that is a source of major concern, both for the speedy restoration of the country's stability but also for regional and international peace and security. More than ever, these developments are appealing to our conscience and pushing us to to ramp up our efforts to help and encourage Libyans to engage in dialogue while rebuilding unity and national cohesion and generating national consensus on their shared goals, with the help of the international community.

We remain utterly convinced that only through dialogue and national reconciliation can the various parties overcome the serious crisis they find themselves in, with all the consequences that could have for the entire region. I can only say once again that a solution that is so hoped for — and I do not think there can be the slightest disagreement about it — can come only from Libyans themselves, for Libya. The international community's duty is to bring all possible political and diplomatic means to bear in supporting, encouraging and promoting that unique right. That is why my country will continue to work, particularly through the efforts and action undertaken on behalf of the United Nations by Mr. Bernardino León, to help to create consensus on a political solution that preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Libya and the cohesion of its people, a solution that will pave the way for the establishment of the national institutions that Libyans want. Algeria, duty bound by its solidarity with the Libyan people, but also because Libya's stability concerns it directly, as it does all the neighbouring countries, has initiated and fully and wholeheartedly endorsed the efforts of those neighbours, the African Union and the international community to support our Libyan brothers on the path of dialogue and reconciliation.

I would also like to recall that it is also at Libya's request that my country has continued to deploy efforts, with the discretion that this kind of situation requires, to bring different viewpoints closer together and pave the way for an inclusive dialogue that will, of course, be open only to those who reject violence and terrorism. That approach reflects a willingness to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the search for a political solution to the crisis affecting our neighbour and brother country.

We commend the work that has been done by the group of Libya's neighbouring countries. Algeria, which is taking on the responsibility for coordinating the group's security affairs committee, will fulfil its task faithfully and with determination. We will of course continue to support Mr. León, with whom we are maintaining a dialogue at every level in order to ensure that he can pursue his efforts and approach with a view to reuniting all the parties. The negotiations conducted at Ghadames I and II and in Geneva are emblematic of the existence, ultimately, of a willingness on the part of those parties, which we believe to be sincere, to seek a political solution among themselves. We are pleased that during the last round of inter-Libyan dialogue at Ghadames II, the various parties in the Libyan crisis committed to establishing an agenda for forming a Government of national unity.

In our view that is a crucial and necessary step. We believe that the formation of a Government of national unity will affirm in the eyes of Libyans themselves their full national sovereignty and allow it to receive every kind of legitimate help and support from the international community and the Security Council. Establishing such a Government of national unity

would, in our view, constitute the best guarantee in the fight against terrorism, which, as everyone — or at least those who have experienced it — knows, feeds on chaos and weak State institutions.

For its part, Algeria will make a full contribution to that effort. We solemnly reaffirm our commitment to continuing our efforts with our neighbours and international stakeholders to arrive at a political solution that will ensure the restoration of security and stability in our brother country and promote the building of a State with strong institutions capable of meeting every challenge, including the priorities of eradicating terrorism and every form of extremism. My country also reiterates its commitment to providing all the help necessary for establishing and strengthening Libya's united public institutions, and we will do it with all possible international good will, as agreed on with the Libyan authorities. Algeria hopes fervently that the Libyan nation can unite as soon as possible. The Libyan people are demanding it, its neighbours are waiting for it, and I think I can say that the entire international community, as evidenced at today's meeting, is hoping for it.

We do not have the right to fail in this mission, and we have a duty to be sincere, to be clear and to learn the lessons of the past. Every Libyan citizen, every refugee and every displaced person, the memory of every victim of terrorism and blind violence demands it of us. And every people of the region demands it, demands that we do not fail and that we work together for a united Libya, living in peace with all its citizens and all its neighbours. Algeria will do all it can to contribute, with all possible tenacity and determination.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): Italy condemns in the firmest possible terms the barbaric killing of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christian citizens in Sirte, and we express our deepest condolences and solidarity to the families of the victims and the Egyptian authorities.

The Libyan crisis is one of the most pressing, sensitive challenges facing the international community today. There has been a grave deterioration in the security situation, particularly in Tripoli, as evidenced by the attack on the Corinthia Hotel on 27 January, followed by other serious episodes. This requires that all of us support by every means possible the diplomatic action that is being pursued to resolve the crisis. Thanks also to this Security Council meeting, we are witnessing a growing awareness of the crisis and of the need for a timely solution. What we expect from this meeting is a realization once and for all that here at the United Nations we need measures that can stabilize the country indefinitely.

In its difficult transition to democracy, Libya has remained vulnerable to divisions between the factions that compromise attempts to invigorate that transition. While the election produced a Parliament and Government recognized by the international community, it did not mark a turning point in the political process. Libya's fragile political and institutional framework risk being filled by the threat of terrorist groups, against which we must stay strong, and by the joining of forces of local factions and extremists. We cannot allow that to happen. On the contrary, we must redouble our efforts to support the process of dialogue facilitated by the United Nations, which is showing increasing signs of vitality, with a view to the rapid formation of a national unity Government that is able to stabilize the country, assert its authority over the whole territory, and jumpstart reconstruction.

Italy has supported the United Nations mediation efforts from the start, convinced that a political solution is the only way out of the crisis in Libya. Some preliminary results have been achieved at the Geneva and Ghadames meetings, thanks also to the dedication of Special Representative Bernardino Léon, whom we thank for his efforts. Italy is pleased to have contributed to this progress by making available to the United Nations its network of contacts and providing logistics support for several sessions.

Our shared goal is to empower the moderate front on the Libyan political scene. We need a clear-cut, renewed commitment from all those who believe in dialogue as the only way forward. The success of that dialogue will require and must aim for the conclusion of a credible ceasefire respected by all the parties to the conflict throughout the country. But the latest developments also send the message, loud and clear, that we do not have forever. In Libya, we are dealing not with monolithic blocs but rather with many different fronts that have their own internal conflicts and interests. The splintering of the parties is both a challenge to and an opportunity for the United Nations mediation efforts.

The next few weeks, we believe, will be crucial to the future of Libya. Italy intends to step up its support

for the efforts of the United Nations and is ready to do its part in the framework of the decisions that the Security Council may take. At the same time, the deterioration of the situation on the ground demands a change in pace on the part of the international community before it is too late. This is why Italy looks with expectation to the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. The Mission should be equipped with the mandate, the means and the resources needed to accelerate the political dialogue and to stabilize and assist a new reconciliation framework and a new national unity Government in Libya.

The international community must send the message that, once the Libyans themselves have reached the compromise needed to form a national unity Government, it is ready to resume its cooperation and support. We must not find ourselves unprepared when that moment arrives, which we hope will be soon. If we do, we risk not only an immediate negative impact on the political sustainability of the national unity Government, but also the advance of radicalism and a worsening of the humanitarian situation.

Allow me to recall here the tragedy of the thousands of persons who flee the country on unsafe vessels headed for the Italian and European coasts. Since the beginning of the year, the European Union's Operation Triton has already rescued 5,302 people from the sea, an almost 60-per cent increase over 2014. These statistics clearly indicate to us the dimensions of the challenge we face. What is happening in Libya has a profound impact both in Africa and in Europe, on both shores of the Mediterranean, with grave repercussions on the stability of Libya's neighbours — including Italy — and on the success and sustainability of the transition processes in the area.

It will be our job from the start to assist the Libyan authorities in the stabilization of the country. Even in the most optimistic scenario, this process may be long and fragile, requiring coordinated action on the part of various international stakeholders. Italy is willing to take a leading role in this task, in the framework of a United Nations initiative and together with our partners in the region. We are ready to contribute to the monitoring of the ceasefire and the keeping of the peace. We are ready to work to train security and military units, in the framework of the integration of the militants into the regular army, and for the rehabilitation of the country's infrastructures. We are ready to treat and to heal the wounds of war and to resume our broad programme of cooperation with Libya. The civilian population must clearly see the advantages of the reconciliation championed by the international community.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the full, resolute support of Italy for the stabilization of Libya through the dialogue sponsored by the United Nations. We do so fully aware, as we must all be, that the deterioration of the situation on the ground demands a change of pace on the part of the international community. And it demands the maximum possible commitment of us all to the pacification of the country so as to prevent Libya from becoming a victim of a blind and desperate terrorism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on China's accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month, and to welcome His Excellency Mr. Mohamed El Hadi Dayri, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya; His Excellency Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt; and His Excellency Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs of Algeria. Algeria, Egypt and Libya are three brotherly countries.

I am also grateful to Mr. Léon for his briefing via video-teleconference from Tunis.

I welcome your decision to convene this meeting, Sir, demonstrating the United Nations determination to address the threat posed to Libya by terrorism, in particular in the light of recent developments and the dangerous upsurge of the phenomenon, which threaten the security and stability of Libya and have negative repercussions for its neighbours, including Tunisia. Against that backdrop, I reiterate Tunisia's firm condemnation of the heinous massacre perpetrated by terrorist groups against innocent Egyptian citizens, as well as its solidarity with the people and the Government of Egypt following that detestable crime.

It goes without saying that this painful incident only reaffirms the growing threat posed by terrorist organizations operating across borders, which leaves no country unscathed, including my own. Tunisia has suffered from this phenomenon. A dastardly terrorist operation took place close to our western border yesterday, resulting in the death of four heroic

national guardsmen. I take this opportunity to offer our condolences and commemorations to their families. May they rest in peace.

We reiterate Tunisia's firm and ongoing commitment to condemning all forms and manifestations of terrorism. We are determined to participate in international and regional efforts to earnestly and decisively address this phenomenon and halt its further spread, which threatens international peace and security and requires coordinated efforts.

Tunisia maintains close relations with the brotherly country of Libya through our shared history and geographical proximity, as well as through our social links and common civilizational affinities. We also have close ties with other neighbouring States and those of the western Mediterranean basin, and are concerned about their situation in the face of extremism, terrorism and radicalism, which impact the security and stability of Libya and the entire region.

Tunisia understands that, in response to the growing activity of terrorist and extremist groups in Libya, the Security Council is working to address the threats posed to peace and stability. Given the deteriorating situation in Libya, we must be united in our efforts to ensure the precedence of a political solution. Any option that circumvents a political solution will only exacerbate and complicate the situation further. We believe that, today more than ever before, this is a responsibility that must be shared by all. We must strengthen our support and ensure that there is reconciliation and understanding between those Libyan political parties that eschew violence and understand that dialogue is the key to national unity. An end must be put to the crisis and Libyan institutions built to meet the aspirations of our Libyan brothers, with a view to enabling greater stability, security and development.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again express Tunisia's support for the mediation efforts made by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bernardino León and by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to bring together all Libyan partners in a constructive dialogue to promote reconcilation and pave the way for democracy.

We reiterate our call to the entire international community to support efforts made by Libyan parties to avoid divisive politics and promote dialogue.

Alongside neighbouring States, we have contributed to strengthening political dialogue to resolve the Libyan crisis. We will make every effort to help our brothers in Libya achieve a peaceful solution that would ensure the return to stability, through the promotion of the State and the rule of law, and to once again revive their hopes so that they may build a Libyan future based on sovereignty, stability and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.